

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:BWBROWN/DKUX

APPROVED BY S:THE SECRETARY

NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.

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S/S- MR. BORG

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 157508

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: U.S. STANCE TOWARD INDIA: PRELIMINARY VIEWS

REF: NEW DELHI 8557

FROM THE SECRETARY

1. YOUR MESSAGE IS RIGHT ON TARGET IN TERMS OF THE POSTURE YOU RECOMMEND IN THIS EARLY STAGE. DURING THIS INITIAL PERIOD, WE AGREE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD AVOID ANY ACTIONS WHICH WOULD UNDERCUT THE BASIS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH EITHER MRS. GANDHI OR A SUCCESSOR REGIME.

2. MUCH AS WE REGRET HER MOVES TO CURTAIL INDIA'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, WE HAVE NO REAL CAPACITY TO AFFECT EVENTS. GRATUITIOUS USG CRITICISM OF MRS. GANDHI'S ACTIONS MIGHT PROVIDE PSYCHIC PLEASURE, BUT WOULD OBVIOUSLY INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE-
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COME A WHIPPING BOY, AND IMPAIR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP

MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY RELATIONS OVER THE LONG HAUL.

3. WE ALSO AGREE THAT WE SHOULD REVIEW OUR POSTURE PERIOD-
ICALLY AS THE SITUATION UNFOLDS. SHOULD INDIA BECOME

INCREASINGLY AUTHORITARIAN, THE NATURE OF INDO-US TIES
AND EXCHANGES COULD ALTER. FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST,
IT SEEMS WISEST TO DEFER JUDGMENT ON THE FUTURE SCOPE
FOR BILATERAL COOPERATION.

4. REGARDING CURRENT OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS, WE BELIEVE
WE SHOULD CONTINUE THE PREVIOUSLY AGREED PATTERN OF
JOINT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES, NAMELY THAT WE LEAVE THE
INITIATIVE TO THE INDIANS AND NOT GET OUT AHEAD OF THEM.
WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUBCOMMISSION MEETINGS
SHOULD NOT BE SCHEDULED UNTIL AFTER THE JOINT COMMISSION
MEETS. ANY PLANS FOR NEW ACTIVITIES SHOULD OF COURSE BE
REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT.

5. ON THE QUESTION OF THE PRESS LINE, WE AGREE WITH YOU
AND ARE STICKING WITH A STRICT "NO COMMENT" STANCE. ONLY
COMMENT MADE THUS FAR HAS BEEN A LOW KEY WHITE HOUSE AND
SUBSEQUENTLY STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN EXPRESSION OF
REGRETS OVER IMPOSITION OF PRESS CENSORSHIP. WE ALSO
MADE A PROTEST THROUGH INDIAN EMBASSY HERE OVER EXPULSION
OF WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT LEWIS SIMONS.

6. ON OFFICIAL TRAVEL, WE CONCUR WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATION
AND WILL REVIEW TRIPS TO INDIA ON CASE BY CASE BASIS,
SEEKING EMBASSY VIEWS WHEN DEEMED NECESSARY. WE WILL
DISCOURAGE VISITS BY SENIOR PERSONNEL.

7. PEACE CORPS HAS ASKED FOR YOUR ADVICE REGARDING 23
PEACE CORPS PERSONNEL SERVING IN OUTLYING AREAS. ARE
THEY IN ANY DANGER FROM LOCAL DISTURBANCES? AS SEEN FROM
HERE, THERE APPEARS NO NEED FOR ANY CHANGE IN OPERATIONS,
BUT WE WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS. ALSO, WE ARE NOT CLEAR
WHAT YOU MEAN THAT YOU ARE LIMITING USG SPONSORED PRO-
GRAMS IN OUTLYING AREAS (PARA 3, REFTEL). PLEASE
ELUCIDATE. IN GENERAL, WE WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE PROGRAMS
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IN A NORMAL ROUTINE WAY.

8. APPRECIATE YOUR EXCELLENT REPORTING. KEEP IT UP. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MARTIAL LAW, FOREIGN RELATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE157508
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BWBROWN/DKUX
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750231-0225
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750786/aaaaczfq.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 NEW DELHI 8557
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 AUG 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. . STANCE TOWARD INDIA: PRELIMINARY VIEWS
TAGS: PFOR, IN
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006